There they were, lounging relaxedly in armchairs. The Beatles' Debating Society—with John Lennon as chairman, Messrs. Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr in support. The subject under discussion was "Folk Music" . . . it's importance and place in pop. And, more important, THEIR views on it all.

Chairman John made the introductory speech. "Folk boom? What folk boom? There's no folk boom! How do you mean, folk boom? What's it all about, folks? Folk boom? You're asking about a folk boom, aren't you? And I'm saying WHAT folk boom!"

It was going to be one of THOSE interviews, obviously. But facts are facts. John Lennon has been a long-time enthusiast of Bob Dylan's work and the other Beatles have expressed enthusiasm on umpteen occasions. The Beatles' Debating Society was hurriedly called to order.

BOB DYLAN

Chairman John developed his theme, warming to the discussion with a distinctly serious face. He said: "What I mean is —there's no such thing as a folk boom at the moment and I honestly don't see that there ever will be.

"You see, all it consists of right now is Bob Dylan and Joan Baez and perhaps The Seekers. Great . . . specially for them. I DO like Dylan a lot and I reckon he's a very interesting character to talk to. But that little handful doesn't add up to a BOOM, now, does it?"

Messrs. Paul and Ringo nodded sagely. They obviously felt they might as well let John carry on talking for all of them. Not much of a DEBATE, perhaps, but interesting enough coming from the world kings of pop.

John again, then: "Folk music will always be with us. You always get these characters who comment on the world round them and all that. But commercially, I think it won't be much bigger than blue-beat. You know, it's just something that exists. It's here and it'll always have a reasonable following. Sure, you get more folk records in the charts, but it's more a fad than a boom. I'm sure."

He suddenly remembered an advertisement he'd seen, offering "folk caps" for sale to fans. And he said: "This folk business certainly isn't big enough here for that loon to be advertising those hats. Come and buy a Folk Cap . . . well, I meantersay. . . ."

JOAN BAEZ

George Beatle prodded a lean finger towards the ceiling and said: "Anyway, a couple of months ago, they were calling them Beat Caps. Before that, as far as I'm concerned, they were calling them Huckleberry Finn Caps." A short speech . . . then back to John again.

"No, I think we regard Dylan as the greatest. What more can you say about folk than that? He really is a great character. I suppose his only trouble is that he's a bit way-out when you first meet him. You know, you don't really know what's going on inside him. But his songs are fine. Anyway, you know that bit—we've done our share of raving about him."

SEEKERS

So . . . The Beatles DO like some folk music but don't think it quite up to world-beating status. They've got plenty in their own record collections—but they don't expect to see the artistes concerned hogging the limelight, not with The Beatles up there at the top of the charts.

But WHAT do they like, Dylan apart? The debate was thrown open to all four Beatles.

Well, you can't expect them to talk about well-known characters. There is, for instance an American, John Kroner—who is NOT really well known but who has clearly tickled the Beatle fancy. There's an LP they play a lot called *Rags, Blues and Hollers*, featuring Ray "Spider" Davis. And they like John Hammond, who was recently in Britain and did top telly-spots to boost his first disc release here. John Hammond is actually a long-time mate of Bob Dylan. . . .

Anyone else? Somebody called Dave Van Ronk. Said John Lennon: "Even Donovan has heard of him. . . ."

Dunno anything else about him but The Beatles rate him highly, so they say. Just for a moment I thought it was one of their "send-up" gags, but they assured me 'twas not so.

Ringo and Paul had both contributed to this section of the debate. But it was John Lennon again who actually wound the whole thing up.

He said: "Don't know exactly where he fits in, but there's somebody else we like a lot. That's Dominic Behan, though we don't know whether you can really call him folk or not. From the way he talks, he doesn't really like anyone else apart from himself, if you know what I mean. But we do like his work. Especially his song *Liverpool Lou*. That's great.

"But folk boom? What folk boom? There's no folk boom. I mean, how can there be a boom when there's so few people involved?"

The Beatle Debating Society took a silent vote on it and agreed with their chairman.

Only one thing really came out of it all. Bob Dylan's ears simply MUST have been burning—after all, the guys talking about him really think he's the greatest.

By
PAUL FRY

B.D.S.*

Sshh! They' in session and they just can' be disturbed. Who? The fabulous Beatles of co and they're talking abou Folk folk for all you Fab. readers. Co on in and lis Sshh!

* *BEATLE DEBATING SOCIETY*